



*HANFORD JOINT INFORMATION CENTER  
NEWS RELEASE.009  
Richland, Washington  
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9:08 a.m.*

## **HANFORD RANGE FIRE ENTERS ITS SECOND DAY**

A brush fire continues to burn across the U.S. Department of Energy's Hanford Site. The fire, which was ignited by an automobile accident early Tuesday afternoon on the northwest corner of the 560-square-mile site, has consumed in excess of 150,000 acres of mostly low grass and other vegetation. No sensitive structures on the Hanford Site are threatened by the fire and on-going monitoring on the Site shows no indication of elevated radiation levels or radioactive or hazardous materials being dispersed as a result of the fire. It should be noted, however, that after any wild fire, a slight radiation release from burning vegetation can be expected.

An estimated 500 firefighters were on the lines overnight and the number of personnel fighting the fire is expected to increase to 1,000 through today as support from other agencies arrives. An estimated 100 pieces of fire fighting equipment from surrounding agencies were part of the fire fighting effort overnight and more than 100 additional pieces are on the way. Nine air tankers and seven heavy helicopters are also expected to participate.

The fire was reported at 1:37 p.m. Tuesday, June 27 following the auto accident. The Department of Energy declared an alert level emergency at 5:14 p.m. on Wednesday, June 28 when the fire crossed State Route 240 and moved toward the center of the Site. An alert level emergency is the lowest of the three DOE emergency categories and requires activation of Hanford's Emergency Operations Center, which includes communication and consultation with a number of outside agencies.

"My primary concern throughout this event has been for the safety of our workers and their families, our neighbors in the local communities, and Hanford Site facilities," said Keith Klein, manager of the DOE Richland Operations Office. "All our resources are being brought to bear on the fire in cooperation with local, state, and federal agencies. We are watching fire and weather conditions very closely."

### **The Fire Impacts Hanford Work Force**

Due to the fire, only those employees essential to maintain health and safety are being allowed onto the site. Another 8,000 employees of DOE and DOE contractors stationed in the 100, 200, 300 (north of Horn Rapids Road) and 400 Areas and the HAMMER Training Center and Patrol Training Academy

have been instructed not to report to work today. Employees stationed at locations south of the 300 Area are reporting to work as usual.

Hanford Patrol estimates that 60 to 100 employees are in an essential category for the facilities effected by closure. The essential employees traveling to work today can use Route 4 to reach their work locations on the Hanford Site. The Yakima Barricade was open to essential personnel for access from Vernita Bridge or Highway 24.

Employees should expect to be stopped at the Wye Barricade or the Yakima Barricade and have their identification checked as essential employees. Rattlesnake Barricade south of the 200 West Area is closed. The Wye Barricade is open. Roadblocks for the 300 Area just north of the Richland city limits are located at Cyprus and Route 4 South and at the George Washington Way gate. Restrictions are still in place on the movement of essential personnel so that no adverse health effects are experienced due to smoke.

A power outage at approximately 12:30 a.m. on Thursday affected portions of the Hanford Site and the DOE Emergency Operations Center at the Federal Building in Richland. The loss of alarm protection on the Site was only momentary and all reset immediately. Hanford Patrol units were in the locations of the tripped alarms and reported no problems.

The loss of power was attributed to a Bonneville Power Administration switch with no major impacts to the Hanford Site expected.

More information will be made available, as it becomes known. Media inquiries should be directed to the Hanford Joint Information Center at (509) 376-3322; the phone number for Public inquiries is (509) 376-8116. Also, Emergency broadcast information can be heard on KONA Radio on 610 AM and 105.3 FM.

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